



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 22, 2004

Contact: Jack Miller 858.694.3595

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

MEDIA ADVISORY

Dead Bird Tests Positive for West Nile virus

WHO: Jack Miller, County Vector Control
Wilma Wooten, M.D., Deputy Public Health Officer
Kerry Mahoney, D.V.M., County Veterinarian

WHAT: West Nile virus press conference

WHERE: Department of Environmental Health, Vector Control Program Offices
9325 Hazard Way (Behind building in rear parking lot.)
San Diego, CA 92123 (Thomas Brothers 1297 – E7)

WHEN: July 22, 2004, 11:00 a.m.

WHY: 1. Inform the public that a San Diego bird has tested positive for West Nile virus.
2. Ask public to eliminate all standing water around their homes and businesses.
3. Provide information on human health risks and personal protection.
4. Inform public of actions County of San Diego is taking to minimize risk.
5. Provide information on threat to domestic animals and availability of horse vaccine.

BACKGROUND: West Nile virus, common throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, was first reported in the U.S. in 1999. In 2003 nearly 10,000 human cases were confirmed, and there were 264 human deaths. Additionally, the County identified 5 dead birds and 1 horse that tested positive for the virus. The County of San Diego is anticipating its first human case of West Nile virus this year. Controlling mosquito breeding, and eliminating backyard breeding sites, is key to preventing the spread of the virus.

COUNTY ACTIONS: The County has embarked on an aggressive monthly aerial larviciding regimen. Granules containing *Bacillus sphaericus*, a naturally occurring biological larvicide, will be applied to known mosquito-breeding sites. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide acts as a growth regulator and effectively kills the developing mosquito larvae. Extensive laboratory tests have shown the granules do not have an adverse effect on fish or wildlife, and does not pose a threat to local area residents. Local field studies conducted last year have proven that biological larviciding is a very effective and efficient method to combat mosquitoes and West Nile virus.

PHOTO-OP: Remarks by County Officials; live mosquito-eating fish; mosquito traps; samples of larvicide granules; equipment used to distribute larvicide; insect repellent; West Nile virus educational materials.

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